Rubber production

308. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of rubber production in the country for the last three years, year-wise;

(b) whether Government have recently lifted all restrictions for rubber imports;

(c) if so, the details of rubber imports during the last three years, year-wise;

(d) whether Government have felt the need to allocate special funds to help improve production in order to revive the rubber industry;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Production of natural rubber in the country during the last three years is given below:-

Year	Quantity (in tonnes)
2001-02	631,400
2002-03	649,435
2003-04	711,650

(b) Government has recently lifted the port restrictions on import of natural rubber.

(c) Import of rubber during the last three years is given below:

Year	Quantity (in tonnes)
2001-02	49,769
2002-03	26,217
2003-04	44,199

(d) and (e) The Government, through Rubber Board, is already implementing a number of plan schemes for the development of the rubber sector. These schemes provide for suitable financial/technical assistance to the growers, processors, exporters etc. for increasing production of natural rubber through expansion of area, enhancing the productivity, improving the quality of the produce to achieve competitiveness in the global markets, promoting agricultural and technological research in the interest of the industry, besides promoting export of this commodity.

(f) Does not arise.

Limestone export

309. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state: